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AN

ORATION

BEFORE THE

CITY AUTHORITIES OF BOSTON,

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1873.

By JOHN F. W. WARE.



BOSTON:

ROCKWELL & CHURCHILL, CITY PRINTERS,

122 WASHINGTON STREET.

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CITY OF BOSTON.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, July 7, 1873.

Ordered, That the thanks of the City Council be tendered to the Rev. John F. W. Ware for the very patriotic and eloquent Oration delivered by him before the Municipal Authorities of this city on the Fourth of July instant; and that he be requested to furnish a copy thereof for publication.

Passed; sent down for concurrence.

L. R. CUTTER, *Chairman*.

IN COMMON COUNCIL, July 10, 1873.

Concurred:

E. O. SHEPARD,
President.

Approved July 12, 1873.

HENRY L. PIERCE, *Mayor*.

ORATION.



MR. MAYOR, GENTLEMEN OF THE COUNCILS, CITIZENS:—

The republic draws toward the close of its first century of life. It has escaped the ordinary diseases of adolescence, and we, its children, fondly hope that its life shall be told in uncounted centuries, and that only He who outlives the record of all things shall write its epitaph. It has survived the evil augury of those jealous of it, and of the principles it has essayed to teach; it has passed crises its friends looked forward to with solicitude, or faced with apprehension, while it has been spared that fatal monotony of which the old sea-king chants,—“He who has never been wounded lives a weary life.” On its front are honored scars; on its brow wounds yet bleeding. It has a career; it has made a name; it is become a power. It has gone out into the records of time, and the fame thereof can never die. No century of other national existence to be matched against its century of life. Where, in remoter ages or in more immediate time, do we find a people in its maturity achieving what this republic has in its youth?

Flavored of God in the time and the conditions of its birth; in its isolation from foreign entanglements; in its various climate and resource; in river and mountain and harbor and mine; in unity of empire; in form and administration of government; in its religion and its culture; in the industry and integrity of a people not weighted by old-time disability; favored of God in every trial that has disciplined it, the republic has had every element of greatness given it,—has been under bonds to success. This is its great holiday and festival, the anniversary of that immortal morning when the bell in the old tower at Philadelphia, proclaiming “liberty throughout the land,” chanted to the ages the new anthem of the free. Of all red-letter days in the human calendar, none so pregnant in meaning and in hope. To us it is the “Glorious Fourth,”—glorious by the glory where-with the fathers baptized it, glorious with the new glory that its sons have won for it upon the battlefield. In one proud memory we weave the names of Philadelphia, Vicksburg and Gettysburg. All through the land, from the boy in the nursery to the man of furrowed brow and deadening senses, the day has been welcomed with turbulent exuberance, as the excited patriot foretold. Under our enthusiasm the very laws are silent. Small boys and bigger boys

defy the imperative edict of the city, and the most irreproachable of policemen sees without seeing, hears and forbears. It is the jubilee and carnival of extravagance and noise, — strange inspirations of the genius of liberty. We will keep the nation's birthday in soberer sort, recalling the blessings of the past, recounting the obligations of the present, looking not at success and privilege only, but at danger and duty, beseeching the great All-Father so to move in and control the hearts of all His children that when He sets the epitaph above its tomb, it shall be in the Master's brief, expressive phrase, "Well done."

Unlike other nations, ours has no pre-historic existence. Out of a vast, vague past no grim ancestry looks at us. We do not draw our blood of the demi-gods of classic antiquity, or the wild heroes of the Norse Valhalla. Into no dreamy myth-land do we wander searching the corner on which to rest our pedigree. No heraldry blazoned with emblems of forgotten significance, no legends hoar with gathered years, lend their fictitious dignity. It pleases us sometimes to tie ourselves back to an Anglo-Saxon ancestry, and, when we are a little mad with England, we grow specially rhetorical about a common origin and a common property in her language, literature and fame. But it is not so at all. We are a new

people, the parvenus — the new-comers — of the world. That from which our fathers deliberately separated themselves, that which they fled from and flung away, that from which ocean and sympathy and career divide us, why should we be ambitious to claim? Why not consent to be the new people that we are, and that in other moments and in other things it is our pride to be considered? Why, in a sort of rhetorical maudlin, claim Shakespeare and Westminster Abbey and Runymede and Naseby fight? They are not ours. We have history and an ancestry of our own, great enough to satisfy any ambition. Our birth is prosaic, and our history neither dim nor uncertain. It has no twilight for fancy to dwell upon, or to draw weird pictures out of. It is hard to work its stern features into poetry, rhetoric, or painting. Our ancestors were *men*, not warriors, not sea-kings, not demi-gods, but men moulded in the matrix of a rare manliness; men who grew by the hard things God blessed them with; who couldn't be bent by circumstance, by disaster, by tyranny; before whom all these bended and disappeared. The bald facts stand patent to the world. Our fathers were men an old world did not want, men of troublesome conscience and earnest spirit, who had lost faith in kings and in kings' followers, who believed in a light to shine from God's truth into the heart and into the world

which men had never seen. It is not forcing fact to speak of the republic as sprung from the loins of the Pilgrims. There were other men of other motive to settle themselves along the Atlantic shore; but playing no part in the busy drama are James-town, and the first harbor of Lord Baltimore's colony, and Hendrik Hudson's discovery, and the Huguenots' retreat. Some local influence of each survives in custom, institution, character; but the world goes on forgetting them. Alone has Pilgrim character and Pilgrim principle outrun the narrow limit of province and of blood. The men of Scrooby village, the passengers of the Mayflower, the exiles of Plymouth rock, or the more courtly men of the later Massachusetts Colony, have given their character to the republic. The pact of the Mayflower preceded, contained, necessitated the Declaration of Independence as the blossom precedes, necessitates, contains the fruit. It is the Pilgrim spirit that breathes in that immortal paper; that guided that first bold signature, which the brave man hoped was large enough for kings to see; that to-day dominates the land. In the same breath that they have denied, derided, despised the men and principles of New England, have I heard men make the half-reluctant, half-admiring confession, that there is no hope to the country except in their supremacy. Not yet quite

true of them what Plutarch says of the good King Numa: "It is the fortune of all good men that their virtue rises in glory after their deaths, and that the envy which evil men conceive against them never out-lives them long;" but it grows upon the people as they outgrow local prejudice, and will grow as we shall sink petty and sectional jealousies, and come at last to have a country, that but for the men who landed at Plymouth, the America of the first century could not have existed. Christianity dates back to a stable in Judea; the republic to the hard gray rock by the sea. Upon it American liberty was born. Its sponsors were the grim men who had dared despots, disease and storm. It bases and supports the nation, and the principles of it are the stay and staff of the republic. The calm, judicious De Tocqueville says: "Here is a stone which the feet of a few poor fugitives pressed for an instant, and this stone becomes famous; it is treasured by a great nation; a fragment is prized as a relic. But what has become of the door-steps of a thousand palaces?" In no metaphor is it that the republic is founded on a rock. The American republic to-day is the century growth of the seed dropped upon it.

I will not make the part in the national anniversary to which you have invited me, a thing of meaningless, exaggerated boast. I pay most cordial

honor to, I claim and am proud to own as countrymen, the historic men who took their part, or lived or died for the Commonwealth; while I believe the real founders and fathers of the republic to have been those from whom we more immediately take descent, and that their policy, principles, character, have stamped themselves upon, will perpetuate the nation. And more than policy or principle, it is the character they were of, the actual men they were, the lives they lived out before all men, the genuine, sturdy manhood that they made, that is their special boon to us, that calls for special gratitude, for study and for imitation. Other men have had honorable ancestors, other men have had costly legacies, but never have people entered into such heritage as we. In privilege, we stand at the head, before all peoples, and the privilege is in the manhood we may look up to. Over all, that was the characteristic of the national fathers. They carried through by it what completest system and policy would have failed in. More than the country they gave, more than the laws they made, more than the principles they established, was the integrity they were of; that their best gift to us. One of the prominent writers of English essay says that "Christianity starts from the unbounded admiration of a person," and that "all

true moral progress is made through admiration." It is our fortune to have the admirable persons of our ancestors before us, though we have not lifted admiration to the point that inspires imitation. That we are a mighty people is reiterated to us from every Senate chamber and every stump, at every civic and political gathering. But the republic, no more than anything else, is stronger than its weakest part. And our weakest part is not our international policy, our system of government, our internal differences; not questions of revenue, currency, labor. It is the moral tone underlying thrift and energy, society and church and law. Side by side with every material prosperity there has been growing a laxity of individual honor, a worship of expediency, a love of the hazards of money and of power, a moral enervation and obtuseness which come to the surface in all dealings, personal and national, and are got to be recognized as the characteristics of the American man. We have not gone on with the steadfastness of our ancestry, building in an honorable life with all we do; but, leaving out the honorable things, have grasped for those which satisfy a low and personal ambition. There was a chance, under the inspirations of the past, under the culture of our institutions, to have built a broad, and recognized, and honored American character;

and there is chance yet, if, forsaking the way in which we have gone too far, we will take the backward step, and build anew, from our fathers' foundations, the fabric of American manhood.

An English writer of our day has said that "patriotism is only another name for the worship of relics." The definition seems to me paltry and unworthy. If it be only that — of the dead past — let it be buried. We can better at any time afford to go without a past, than forego the future. But we cannot dismiss the idea of patriotism that way. It is more; it is deeper; it is holier. No "relic worship" nerved our fathers for that struggle which De Tocqueville declares "was the result of a mature and reflecting preference for freedom, and not the vague or ill-defined craving for independence." It was "more light yet" for man that they saw, as with finger of fire, beckoning them from out the low black clouds that hung upon the western horizon. No "relic worship" sent our sons, our brothers, ourselves, into the civil strife. Not that which was behind in the honored past, but that which lay in the quick womb of hope; not that which had been bequeathed, but that which we should ourselves bequeath. The patriot's is not the backward-looking eye alone, nor do his duties cease with the hour and peril of battle. As the heart in man, so the republic

is always in peril, and danger threatens most when men feel most secure. Only eternal vigilance is safety.

These are the dull and enervating days of peace, and to the excitements of war have succeeded those of commercial prosperity. We have resumed the ways and arts of peace, and we have resumed its neglects. We are settled down as if the war had settled all outstanding questions, and there was nothing for us to do but to pursue the way marked by our ambitions. We speak of danger as past, as if danger were only that which the bayonet could face, and the shell dissipate; as if rebellions against morality were not as disastrous as rebellions against law; as if the worst wounds are not the wounds we give ourselves, and suicide the meanest of all deaths. The perils of the republic are not all passed. I am not one of those who think that permanence and prosperity were secured through that strife, because permanence and prosperity are made of other stuff. It did not cure, it did not probe, it did not reach the worst diseases of the body politic. Though we have closed up that struggle, and voted to call ourselves once more a free, and united, and happy people; though the old stars and stripes to-day float everywhere, and the other changeling is forgotten; though politicians have "shaken hands across a bloody chasm," and

Confederate living have placed flowers above the graves of Federal dead, the republic has not passed the point of peril. Peace came to us too soon. The greatest of war's lessons had not been learned. We came from the contest braggart, self-mastered not at all; our own part in it exaggerated, God's part overlooked. Back to the old ways we went, forward to new careers, with a maddened speed goading ourselves where already there was no need of spur. Everything was inflated, ourselves most of all, everything in excess, no balance, no repose, no foresight; everything under pressure, and one sees no human way out of it except by convulsions which shall shake, not government perhaps, not finance, not commerce, manufactures, trades alone, but, worse and more, that of which already we may count the foreshadows, man's faith in man, in himself, in the very fact of a higher moral law. Consulting the outside of prosperity, we cannot deny the mighty stride of the republic day by day, and while men sleep. Looking only at industry and resource and thrift and material success, it all seems well, too bright to fade. But clouds are in the horizon, and their mutter reaches the ear that is wise to hear. There are conditions about us that cannot continue. Of no time since the formation of the republic may it be more truly said, that all its best, its past, its

promise is at hazard. What the press tells us from day to day of plans and deeds, of policies and politics, of contrivance and connivance, of the clash of interests that are local and selfish with rights that are broad and universal, gives us not the sup of horrors, but the full meal of despairs. There would seem nothing that is not in process of decay. Either these are the most atrocious libels that follow up and fix upon the men of politics and of traffic, or they are to the core morally unsound; either the land is given over to a reprobate tongue, or the men of it, of all classes and occupations, are fatally corrupt.

The war we have had was not, after all, the test and strain of institution and of government. In these peace-days it is that strain and test come; in these that is the nation's trial of what sort it is; in these that the question is to be settled of national advance, national perpetuity, national integrity. What of readjustment the war demanded, what of reconstruction it necessitates, quite as much needed here as elsewhere, north as south. While we are thinking of, legislating for, complaining about the still malcontent, a graver duty lies nearer home. The reconstruction this day needs is not that of once rebellious States; is not a question of local or national policy; is not a thing for force, for law, for enactment, for Executive. It is reconstructed selves

that is demanded, a more conscientious, consistent, individual manhood. The republic is not saved, nor can it be, so long as everywhere the old, unrestrained spirit of self—petulant, aggressive, noisy, on every occasion obtrusive—asserts itself. He looks very superficially at causes and results, who does not know how all life-troubles, civil as personal, spring from the self in man. As the years drift us away from the point of strife, and prosperity, with its cares and deceits, demands us, I cannot feel that the republic is secure, because I do not find that quality of manhood which must underlie the nation, as it should underlie the man. Ours is the dull time of the patriot's existence, but that does not excuse us from the patriot's duties; it is no time to give over a patriot's cares. The patriot spirit does not wait occasion, does not slowly rouse at the last, uttermost peril; it does not need to be perpetually "fired," but is itself a fire; is not a meteor-flash, but a steady, self-feeding flame; is not a moment's effusion, but a life. The patriot is a sober man, anxious in thought, faithful in service, alive to the least and humblest duty as man or citizen, sturdy and steady under dull routine, resolved that through him the republic receive no harm. Only as I can put an honest manhood in, am I in any way a patriot. No feat of arms, no gift of moneys, no imprisonment in Libbys,

no eloquence, no, not death, make men patriot. These are cheap. They are of impulse, of excitement, or of necessity; they strike and act from the nerve, and not the soul. The calm and steady life, true to noblest instinct and loftiest example, ready in duty as in danger, under tame and weary toil as under excited pressure, to do as to die, that makes the patriot, as it makes the man. Washington, Putnam, Greene, are not alone our patriots; the men who died in State street, or on Bunker's Hill; who fell at Gettysburg, or saw the last of the "rebel rag" at Richmond; who lie beneath the turf of ten thousand graves, or who live to flower-crown their memories; but the men in all the land, — north, south, east, west, — the men of toil, the men of scholarship, the men of wealth, who live in devoted fealty to every-day principles of right and honor and truth. To whatever of personal reconstruction is needed, such man will bend himself, not appalled by its difficulty, but stimulated by its necessity. In it will he know no pause, till out of himself shall be taken everything low and mean, and he shall be worthy to support his country, to be the defender of its liberty.

One stern and pressing patriot duty to-day. We, the sovereign people, may be morally upright yet, sound at heart, though there is so much that does not

look like it; but we trust ourselves and all our dearest interests to the keeping of immoral men, — men who never see deeper or further than what shall serve themselves, men who turn the trust we repose in them to that end. Politics is a noble science, but party intrigue and chicanery threaten the very life of the republic. These get into all our responsible places, and rule out principle and brains from custom-houses to school committees. The great interests of the republic must not and cannot remain at the mercy of partisan intrigue or transient gusts of popular opinion. We put men into office who flatter us by calling themselves our servants; and once secure in their place and the manipulations that will keep them there, like the animals spoken of in Scripture, they turn again and rend us. We are as afraid of our servants as the Southern aristocracy was of its slaves. They bully us out of our morality. They leave us scarce the name of liberty. They suffer us in no opinion. They override us by trick. The republic is lapsed into an oligarchy. We keep its name, its form, its phrases; but there is no tyranny on God's earth so galling, so degrading, so fraught with mischief as the tyranny that the moral cowardice of the American people has placed in the hands of the American public man. If we will not break it, it must recoil upon us, or, what is worse, infinitely

worse, upon our children. Of no use our individual morality, if we will not take it out of its individual belongings, and apply it to public service. It is not a half quality. Better without it. Has it come to this that that leading American paper, *The Nation*, can soberly say, "All being corrupt, what is the use of investigating each other?" Has it come to this, that America can undertake nothing without a scandal annexed, a suspicion at least,—a Vienna Exhibition, a Freedman's bureau, a Pacific railway, a Presidential campaign, a Washington treaty? Are we to be followed all the time by the incompetency, the dishonesty, the blunders of those who are, by our system, foisted into places, if not of trust, of conspicuousness?—we can't say honor where no honor is. It is only for us to decide. The shame attaches only so long as we will. We may talk about the evil as in the system, or in the times, or in the men. It is in us. We make that which we allow. Men in place only dare because we permit. The easy-going good-nature with which we look on at things that degrade us in the eyes of nations, and must belittle us in our children's,—turning to our farms and merchandise as if that only concerned us which touches them,—is not a good nature at all, and criminal if it were. It is a blunted moral sense; it is a seared moral consciousness; it is a fatal moral deterioration in you and

in me. Our easy-going is lack of principle, of courage, of patriotism. The great crimes that go unpunished; the prostitution of the great principles of law to the mere juggle of skilful counsel; the spotted judicial ermine; the audacity of what are popularly termed "rings;" the selfishness of overgrown corporations; the grasping, consolidation and defiance of railways; the nullifying of deliberate enactment, — are only out-croppings, permissions of something more radical, individual, which may go on to permit evils more fatal. These are not merely passing phases of a busy life, carelessly absorbed; they are indications of a spirit which strikes at the life of the republic. They are not convulsions of values and shocks of credit and movements of intrigue and fence of reckless men; but deeper than that, they indicate badness at heart, badness in the men, and, equally, badness in you and in me for letting them be where they can do such things. It is not that men in these relations and with these opportunities are above all or peculiarly sinners. These but express through their opportunity the lack that lies in us all. The sin is that the individual American man has lost that fine, penetrating sense of honor and fidelity and self-control and truth, that keen moral sentiment that distinguished the fathers, and, at a time when men worshipped thrones and kings, made of them the leading

power of the globe. More unqualifiedly than Taine puts it of the England of to-day, as compared with the England of Cromwell, may it be said of our to-day America as contrasted with that of our fathers — "We no longer look on life as an august temple, but as a machine for solid profits, or a hall for refined amusements. We have our rich, our working-classes, our bankers who preach the gospel of gold; we have gentlemen, lords, dandies who preach the gospel of manners. . We overwork ourselves to heap up guineas; or else we make ourselves insipid to attain an elegant dignity. Our hell is no longer, as under Cromwell, the dread of being found guilty before a just Judge, but the dread of making a bad speculation, or of transgressing etiquette. We have no moral convictions, and only floating convictions. We have lost the mainspring of action." To have lost moral conviction is indeed to have lost the mainspring of action. Is it not that to which the American public seems to have come? Parry or shield it as we may, is it not that to which the American individual has lapsed? The American reputation cannot long stand the strain, much less the American character. It is the republic that suffers.

The historian Froude has said — "It would be well if there were some definition of freedom; which would

enable men to see clearly what they mean and do not mean by that vaguest of words;" and elsewhere he says — "The entire fabric of human existence is woven of the double threads of freedom and authority, which are forever wrestling, one against the other." In that they knew this, the men of the older republic are distinguished from the men of the later. They had just emerged from a conflict that taught them the self-limitings of freedom; had been face to face with perils from which they learned self-respect as self-restraint. The power they grew to have over themselves, they threw into their government; and there presides over the birth of the new nation a spirit of moderation and of health, which gives to its earlier days the characteristics of an individual, rather than of a people. There is balance, confidence, foresight, consideration in all things planned, undertaken, and the republic moves to its place among the countries of the globe, as steadily, as buoyantly, as the well-ballasted hull glides from the stocks to its place among navies. Time and the security of success have largely lost us the ancestral idea of liberty. It will not occur to the true chronicler of our time to speak of the balance of the republic to-day. Not liberty under law, but liberty above law is our popular idea. And this not the legitimate result of our institutions. Republicanism does not tend to anarchy.

It is no synonym for license. There may be lesser causes, — the reaction from a too stern religion, the enervation of continued success, the rise and struggle between various commercial interests, the relaxing of the rule of home, — but the cause behind all other cause is, that the man has lost the thought of himself as primarily a moral agent, and has given himself to the control of things over which he should have kept the mastery. The republic of to-day reflects its children as that of the fathers did its founders. To shield, to save the republic, we must reach, rouse, convict the man. You, and I, and all America's sons, have got to comprehend that we hold not the destiny of our own souls in our own keeping, or the destiny of untold millions, but the destiny of an idea. The man must go to work upon himself, see in himself the unit of power, the unit of safety. He may not stoop from loftiest principle, because he so endangers the integrity of the republic, the integrity of liberty. Throwing aside all policy of party, of sect, or of self; turning his back upon the wild and lawless pursuit of pleasure, self-indulgence, ambition; shaking himself clear of the encumbering things of mistaken self-interest, under the restraints of a higher law, must he seek that moral manhood, which, as it was the creator of the republic, so shall it be its only safety.

Your Honor and Gentlemen! We are not making a grand American manhood side by side with this great American prosperity; it is not the impulse and inspiration of our activities. All our dangers lie in that; not in foreign entanglements; not in the failure of one or the establishment of the other home policy; not in strifes of labor with capital; not in inflated currency or internal dissension; not in the poor, the ignorant, the depraved, the immigrant, whom we call the dangerous, classes. Our dangers are not in classes at all, but in individuals, who have no pure, elevated manhood, no well-regulated, established, restrained self. The need we have to-day over all other needs is the need of an American manhood; and the culture requisite to an American manhood is not necessarily of schools, of college, of position, of many opportunities or many books. It may come in all its rugged, best proportion where these are not, as a man sitting with himself shall see into the great demands of life, and understand how wide and unselfish moral obligation is. The principles that planted themselves by the winter sea were but the wild waste of ocean currents, save for the men who held and lived them, through whose lives they became immortal. Had there been no Carvers, Brewsters, Winslows; no Winthrops, or Endicotts; no Adamses or Quincys; no Washingtons, Henrys, Jeffersons,

there had been no republic; and stock gamblers, political intriguers, a low judiciary, canting piety, lax morality cannot maintain it. The republic was born in the men who not merely professed, but lived its principles, from the fealty of whose lives the Declaration of Independence and the subsequent Constitution of the United States derived all their dignity and force, and we go on building an enormous and imposing superstructure upon their foundation which must totter to the earth, save as we shall learn to supply its every joint with that sturdy moral probity they were of. It was as manhood failed Carthage and Sparta and Rome that they faltered and fell; as manhood failed, that Cromwell became possible to England, and Napoleon to France. It was manhood failure that made the rebellion inevitable. Would we divert future disaster, ourselves and our children under American culture must grow into American men.

There come to me, over the years, the words, as I think, of Mr. Justice Story — "We stand the latest, and, if we fail, the last experiment at self-government by the people." The republic must not fail; if we be men, it cannot fail. I believe in the future glory of my country; in ever-growing honors to adorn the fair repute of the republic; in a career of which no man would dare to cast the horoscope. In

the far-off years I hear the solid tramp of the centuries as their deep column moves to the consummation of the purposes of God, and at their far front, steady and sublime, I behold the unflinching eagles of the republic; and at the last grand review hers shall be the place of honor at "the head of the column, on the right." Not by "extending the area of freedom," not through any "manifest destiny," shall her glory come, or any of those cheap things of cheap phrase, which have so long pleased the popular ear, and raised the popular applause. Mr. Emerson has lately said of the Egyptians, they "are a perpetual study for the grace of their forms and motions. No people walk so well, none are so upright, none are so well-developed, so strong. It seems as if an artist should go to them for perfect models." To us should the traveller and the man of thought go for the perfect model of a well-developed, upright, moral manhood. We have a history. It has this central day, a central fact, not in our own career alone, but central in human progress. We do not want fireworks, bells, cannon, periods to round and comprise and compress its celebration. Their noisy accord may do, if we have only to recall a past, to worship relics. We have other and more to do. Cheered, lighted, led by the holy influence and bright examples of the past, armed with that armor which our fathers

found of proof, as their posterity and God's sons, let us press forward, out of individual character and endeavor, slowly but surely building, for the world's blessing and our country's good, an American manhood, an American people.



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